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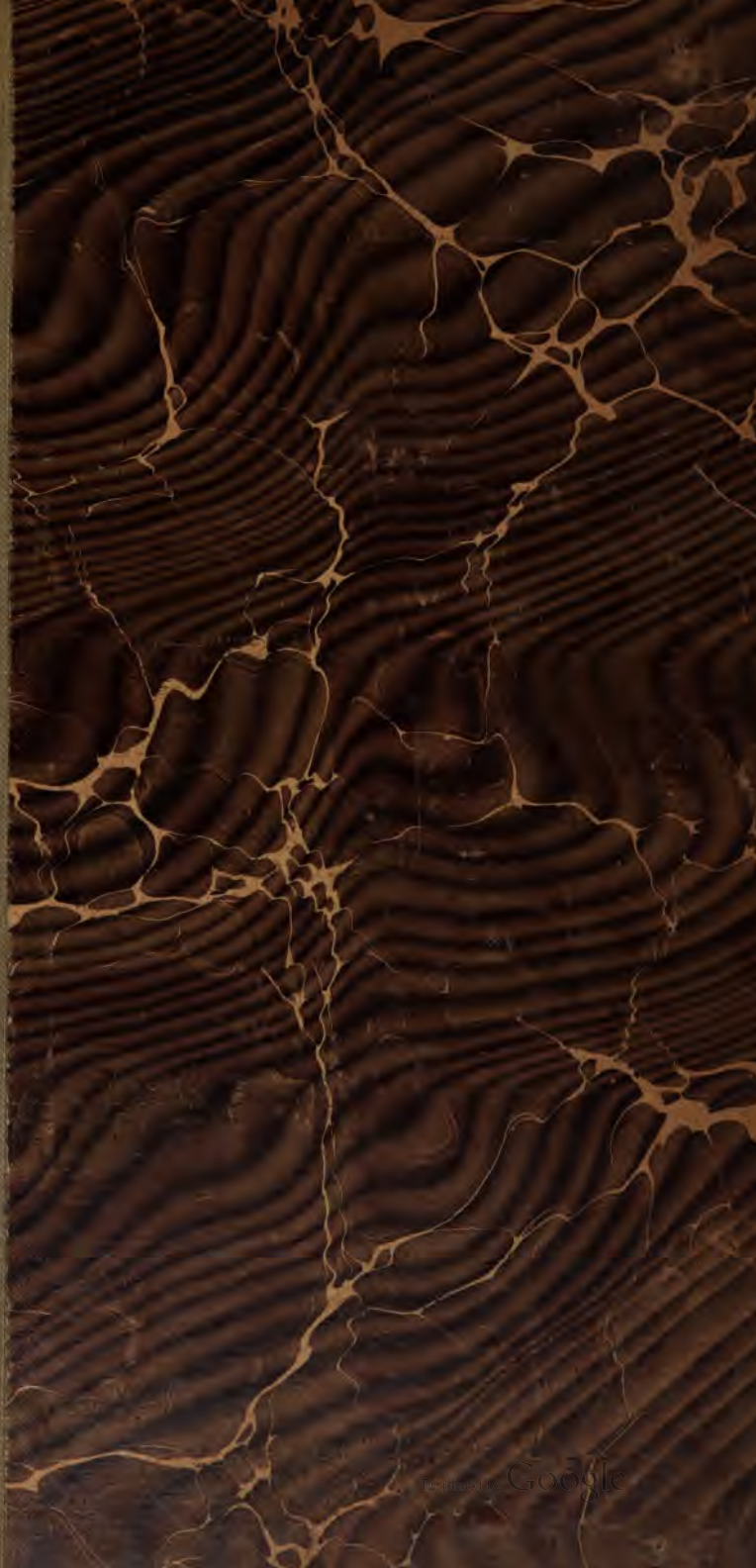
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*me!*  
REV. A. W. BURNHAM, D. D.,  
==

OF RINDGE, N. H., AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

AT

DUNBARTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE,

SEPTEMBER 13, 1865.

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Request of  
Prof. J. H. Thayer

W

## A D D R E S S .

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*Our Early Inhabitants.*—May their virtues ever live in the character of their descendants and survivors.

Response by REV. A. W. BURNHAM, D. D., of Rindge.

MR. PRESIDENT: I am expected to speak of the early inhabitants of this town; and the intimation is given that they were a virtuous people, whose example should be followed by their posterity.

I have not been a resident of this place for nearly three score years. In 1808, I exchanged a shoemaker's bench for a seat in my brother Abraham's study, (Rev. Abraham Burnham, D. D.,) and a shoe for a Latin grammar; so that, as you see, my personal acquaintance with the people was in my boyhood; and I feel but poorly qualified for the part assigned to me on this occasion.

I have in recollection, however, the faces and general appearance of several leading families and individuals, who were among the early, if not the *first*, settlers. Of some of these I may speak before I close.

In general character I suppose our fathers were substantially like all the early settlers of New England. Part of them were of English, and part of Scotch descent, with a few drops,



perhaps, now and then, of the Irish element. Now, combine these, and you will have a good, "live Yankee," such as we see here to-day,—rather such as *we*, their children, claim to be.

We have good reason to believe, that the fathers and mothers of this people were of sound, well informed minds, robust, sturdy, of indomitable purpose—of high and honest aims—noble impulses—fearless of danger, and were just the men to subdue this rough land and rugged soil, and to prepare the way for the flourishing farms which are now seen around us, and to lay foundations for the rich blessings which distinguish New England from all other places, and make it, what it has been justly called, the "moral garden of the world."

We, of this generation, are "a feeble folk," and we have but a faint conception of the hardships and hazards to which our fathers and mothers were subjected in the first half of the century, to which this occasion has reference. But they, like the Pilgrims in the May Flower, had an *object* to secure for themselves and their children, "freedom to worship God—" to establish "a Church without a Bishop, and a State without a King." And, conscious of honest and righteous aims, and relying upon God, they encountered the rocks and trees which then covered these hills and valleys, and the savages and wild beasts, which roamed in these forests, then waving over these now cultivated grounds. But, by the help of God, in whom they trusted, they surmounted the formidable obstacles around them, and left to us the goodly heritage which, in spite of the efforts of ungodly men to wrest from us, we enjoy to-day.

As to their *moral* character—the practice of the cardinal virtues of honesty, faithfulness in fulfilling engagements, integrity, Sabbath keeping, reverence for the name and all the ordinances of God,—I believe they were, at least, on a level with their neighbors in this region, and throughout New England.

Of their industry, frugality, and other kindred, social and personal virtues, our fathers and mothers were noble specimens; and they have left to their children substantial proofs of their excellence in these respects, in the rich inheritance you possess and celebrate to-day.

When I was a boy, and inquired, as I sometimes did, how it came to pass that Capt. Stinson was so rich, for he was the richest man in town, and I think, was said to be the richest *farmer* in "old Hillsborough," they said, that when clearing his lands, "he would work all day in the field, and weave all

night," and that his equally industrious helpmeet "would spin a fortnight by *one* pitch pine knot;" and to illustrate the same general character of these men, it was said of Abraham Burnham, a cooper by occupation, that he "would sit up till midnight, and get up at twelve o'clock." They were not miserly, yet were saving of *time*, as well as of money. They found no time or disposition to be idle—to *loaf*. They did not know the modern meaning of the word. With them, *loaf* was a *substantive*, and had a wholesome *substantial* meaning in their every day experience.

It is but just to say, that this working all night, was not for "filthy lucre's sake," so much as to fulfil engagements. Seldom, indeed, did one neighbor remind another of that singular, but significant expression of Solomon—"One unfaithful man in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." How it is in this particular with the present generation, I have nothing to say; for I am to speak of the old folks, not the children. a

Feeling the great importance of education by their own want of the advantages of schools, the fathers made every practicable effort to give their children all the privileges in this direction in their power. The earliest school teacher I heard of was "Master Hogg," celebrated for his severities in his treatment of erring pupils. On the authority of the late excellent Major John Mills, who, I think, had good reason to remember this teacher's method in respect to one class of delinquents, I will state that a lesson from the catechism was then exacted of every scholar of competent capacity, to be recited, on Saturday. If the scholars failed on that day, he had the privilege of trying again on Monday morning. Failing this time, the unfortunate delinquent was subjected to a punishment as degrading as it was cruel. Should I describe the instrument employed, and the position of the unhappy victim in these savage inflictions, you would not wonder that the boys disliked both the catechism and the whipping. In process of time, the catechism was whipped out of school, and in these days, the children, I apprehend, seldom get either the catechism or the whipping.

To show the value our fathers set upon education, and the earnest desire of their children to secure the benefits of schools, we need only to refer to the facts then existing—such as the thinness of the population, the scantiness of the means, the absence of school houses and school books, well qualified teachers, &c. For instance, my brother, Samuel, when a mere

child, so small that my mother was actually afraid the bears would catch him, came two miles afoot and alone through the woods to this very ground where we are gathered, to attend school. Still, she *sent* him, and the child went. This same boy, when a young man went to *college* the first, I think, that did so, from this town. And he fitted for college on the *plow-beam*. That is to say, taking his Latin grammar to the field, when the team stopped for rest, he sat upon the plowbeam, or the unploughed ground, and studied his grammar; and when prepared with a lesson, he walked over the same ground as in his childhood, and recited to his pastor, Rev. Mr. Harris. So did Thomas Jameson, Abraham and John Burnham, and other young men of those, and subsequent days.

The number of college graduates from this town is, at least, forty, and the average population, I believe, less than a thousand.

And in this connection, I wish to refer to one of these early graduates, because I do not see his name in some lists of the educated young men of the place, and who, I apprehend, is not recollected except by here and there an individual of the people now living. And I speak of him, also, as an illustration of the perseverance of these early sons of the town in the work of securing an education.

I refer to Isaac Garvin, the son of Sam Garvin, as he was called, who I suppose to have been a poor, insignificant individual, from the fact, that when describing any worthless, good for nothing fellow, the people in our neighborhood would say, "he is as shiftless as Sam Garvin." As it regards manual labor and worldly wisdom, Isaac was the *son of his father*; but somehow he obtained a Latin grammar, and ventured to appear before his pastor, and ask him to hear a lesson. Mr. Harris, who encouraged young men in all their efforts in this direction, positively refused to hear him recite, bidding him "go home and go to work." But Isaac persisted and came again, and at length obtained a hearing.

Tom Merrill, as he was called, a young man from Deering, afterward Rev. Dr. Merrill, one of the leading ministers in Vermont, and others, fitted and went on, leaving Garvin plodding at his task; and he kept on plodding, and got *into* College; and at the end of four years, got *out* honorably, and disappearing from these parts, he went to Newark, N. J., studied Theology with Rev. Dr. Griffin, then at the head of American Preachers, came back, and in the presence and the pulpit of the venerated pastor, who once refused to hear his

first Latin lesson, preached to his great satisfaction, and to the astonishment of the citizens. Thus much for one Dunbarton boy, and *he*, the son of Sam Garvin—a strong illustration of the sayings, “By diligence and perseverance the mouse ate in two the cable,” and “little strokes fell great oaks;”—also another saying, I think of Richard Baxter—“Prayer and painstaking will do anything.”

As to the civil concerns and order of the fathers, nothing definite will be expected from me. I think the people in the early years were of a staid, conservative character, not given to change. When they found a man qualified, and at the same time willing to accept an office, they kept him in as long as they could. Thus, Judge Page, Esquire Story, Maj. Mills, John Stinson, Daniel Jameson, John Gould and others, held the same offices from ten to thirty years in succession.

Those were days of honesty and simplicity. For many years you had no Lawyer, and only two Justices of the Peace in the town. Judge Page, at Page corner, and Esquire Story at the South end. You needed no more.

I ought to speak of the religious character of the fathers.

It has been said and written that the early settlers leaned to Arminianism, a sentiment then somewhat prevalent in this region; but I can scarcely admit this to have been the prevailing faith of our fathers. In support of this, take the Scotch portion of the population who came from Londonderry. They believed in the catechism, and the Bible, too, (and so do I, though a Yankee; for I think the two books are very much alike in their teachings.) As to the pure Saxon portion—the Storrs and Burnhams, they came from Ipswich, Mass.,—were trained under the ministry of Rev. John Cleaveland, one of the “New Lights” and able preachers of his day—a disciple of Whitefield, and a thorough believer of the Evangelical doctrines. At any rate, our fathers could not have been irreligious—nor very strong Arminians—nor bad men in any sense. Arminians held to *works*, the Calvinists to *faith* and *works* too, and, put them together, and you have a very good people.

Another point: If not substantially evangelical, would they have received for their first Pastor, such a man as Walter Harris—celebrated for forty years in all New England, as one of the champions of her pulpit—unsurpassed among the preachers of his day in a clear statement, powerful defense, and pungent application of the peculiar doctrines of the Calvinistic system, so called.

He was sometimes called the “Broad ax and the sledge-

hammer of the New Hampshire ministry," and he did in fact cut a way errors in doctrine and practice on the one hand; and on the other, beat in the truth till it would "stay put," or, he exemplified his own words in giving advice to me, then a young preacher—"to hit the nail on the head, then drive it through and clinch it."

But I need not give an account of his beliefs, or his practice, his power as a preacher, his great and excellent influence, or the blessed results of his ministry. I will take occasion, however, here to state to this great assembly what Dr. Harris did *not* believe on one single point, on which much falsehood has been uttered.

When I was a young school teacher and was boarding with Zaehariah Chandler, Esq., of Bedford, father of Hon. Thomas and Samuel Chandler, Esq., I heard this aged gentleman say, that Mr. Harris, of Dunbarton, believed and preached that all "infants, when they died, went to hell." Did you hear him say that, said I. "No, Sir," he replied, but Mr. — heard him." And that is the shape, by the way, in which this statement comes. I have never met with the person, who said he, *himself*, heard Dr. Harris, or Dr. Payson, or any other Rev. Dr. utter, such a sentiment, but Mr. or Mrs. *so* and *so*, heard him. Now it so happened in the orderings of Providence, that I passed the next Sabbath in this place, and heard Dr. Harris preach a sermon having reference to the death of a highly respectable citizen, (Capt. William Parker) your father, Mr. President, if I mistake not—from Job, 14, 10. "But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he." In the sermon Dr. H. said that it had often been alleged that Calvinists, that he himself, believed and taught the doctrine above referred to, and did use the horrid phrase, which had been so long in circulation among certain classes, that I need not offend this audience by repeating it. For himself, and all others justly denominated Calvinists, he denied the charge. And then, throwing his spectacles above his eyes, raising his right arm, and assuming an expression of countenance, such as no other man I ever saw in the pulpit could put on, he solemnly challenged every person who had heard him preach during his whole ministry, to show that he ever uttered such a sentiment. "Why should I?" said he. "Such a thought never entered my heart. I have been acquainted with a large portion of the Calvinistic ministers of New England, and am conversant with their writings; and I feel justified in saying that such a doctrine was

never entertained by them or by the denomination, as such, and I reject the charge as wholly false;" and Dr. Harris added an earnest exhortation that all present should never repeat, but whenever heard, should contradict the slanderous allegation he had denounced. Returning to my boarding place the next day, and obtaining the assent of my venerable host, that Dr. Harris and myself were honest, I related the facts as just stated and exhorted him to do as Dr. H. had enjoined upon his people.

Allow me thus to charge this assembly. I have stated facts and you will grant that Dr. H. was honest and the present speaker honest also. Never then repeat the allegations referred to. It is a slander. No true Calvinist believes any such doctrine. No! millions upon millions of infant souls are to-day, through the grace of God in Christ, in heaven, singing "Hozanna to the Son of David." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us to God by his blood." Please accept the declaration I have here made in your presence as truth and fact; accept it for Dr. Harris, and for all real evangelical christians the world over.

I should trespass on time and patience, were I to indulge myself in further expressions of my admiration of Dr. Harris—the excellence of his character—his singular powers as a preacher, and the happy results of his long and faithful ministry among this people.

I knew your second pastor, Rev. J. M. Putnam, an excellent man, a devout christian, and good minister of Jesus Christ. Also your third and present pastor, the son, as I am, of a godly Deacon, and if he uses the office of a minister as well as his father has used the office of a Deacon, as I trust he will, he too, will "purchase to himself a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

That our fathers believed and loved the gospel, and the ministrations of the Sanctuary, is evident from the early efforts they made to secure the privileges of public worship, and the sacrifices to which they submitted to hear "a gospel sermon." For instance—my parents would, and did ride on *one* horse with *two* children seven miles Sabbath morning "across lots," so to speak, to South Weare, to hear Rev. Amos Wood, a well educated and devout minister of the Baptist denomination. So highly did they esteem him, that they gave *me* his name. I never saw the good man, but when in College, I found and now have a printed Election Sermon preached by him at Amherst, 1794, when John Taylor Gil-

man took his seat, the first time, as Governor of this State.

Allow me to refer, briefly, to some of the families and individuals who come within my own recollection.

The Stinsons.—Capt. William Stinson was of Scotch descent, a pattern of industry, economy, uprightness, and other kindred virtues; esteemed a christian—a cheerful supporter of the gospel, and constant attendant on public worship at home, though he joined the church in New Boston, because, I believe, Dr. Harris was unwilling to baptize the good man's *grandchildren* on the faith of their *grandfather*.

Capt. Stinson had some peculiarities as well as other people. The bottle in which he carried rum into the field for his men, was said to have so small a passage in the neck, that a man would not like to hold it to his mouth so long as to get enough to hurt him. Besides, *then*, the liquor was the genuine article. What it is *now*, *I do not know!*

At the call from the house for meals, every man must *instantly* leave his work, and move for the table, and there he would find everything ready, and thus no time was lost either in the field, or house.

Capt. Stinson had *one price* for the produce he sold, and this, on the average, was less than that in the market. Three shillings, I think, for corn, and four for rye. He was kind to the industrious poor, but to a lazy man he would not even *sell*. It was said that a man of this latter class, of whom he had heard, but not seen, came to buy some corn. His name was Cox. On the way to the granary, the old gentleman inquired—"And what's your name?" "Cox," was the answer. "Aye, Cox? An ye' may cock along hame again, for you'll ha' nae corn the day."

One more anecdote in which Capt. S. had concern, will show the differences in the matter of alms-giving, between those days and our own.

Dr. Harris preached a sermon in reference to the establishment of the N. H. Missionary Society—then, a new, and to many, a strange movement. The good pastor asked for a contribution. After the hats had been passed, Capt. Stinson rose and asked and obtained leave to speak. He felt some objections, but having "freed his mind," he said to my father, "Here Deacon," and dropped into the hat a *silver dollar*. It fell heavily among the small bits which others had put in, and produced a greater sensation in the assembly, and more remark in the community, than would fifty dollars given now by a man of equal property.

I well remember his son, Capt. William Stinson, Jr., generally called "young Capt. Billy"—also "Major" John, a well educated man, and much employed in the concerns of the town—who was selectman twenty-three years, according to Mr. Stark, to whose history of Dunbarton, by the way, I am indebted for some figures and facts.

The Starks and Stinsons were intimately connected in their family relations. I recollect Maj. Caleb Stark, a son of Gen. John, and on his staff in the Revolutionary war. For many years he was the only store-keeper in town. A man of gentlemanly bearing, and of distinction here and elsewhere.

I should have mentioned two brothers of Capt. Stinson, the elder, "Uncle Jamie," and "Uncle Archie," as they were familiarly called. Jeremiah, son of "Uncle Archie," was he only lawyer that ever resided and practiced in town. Like the people in Rindge, where I have lived more than forty years, you have not quarreled enough to maintain a lawyer.

I recollect Judge Page—a very quiet, sensible man. I used to see his venerable form by the side of the Moderator in the town meetings, having on his head a high, conical, green worsted cap.

I have very distinct recollections of David Story, Esq., a near neighbor and relative of my father, and a head man in his neighborhood, and in the town for many years. Dr. Harris pronounced him among the best citizens, and the best magistrate within his knowledge. Of a sound and well balanced mind, looking well to the interests of the town, and acting always according to his convictions of duty, he was a leader in all public affairs for the substance of his business life. He was seventeen times Moderator in town meeting—Town Clerk eleven years—Selectman, six—and Representative six times. Many thought he liked authority. One transaction which I witnessed when a boy had a bearing, perhaps, in this direction. At a common training on this Common, Samuel Lord, an intemperate man, made some disturbance. Esq. Story ordered the Sheriff, Josiah Bagley, to tie Lord's hands together, and fasten the cord to a limb of a low tree. It could not hurt, but only confined him to one spot. He stood fair and firm on his feet. Some one or more persons, for sport, or some other purpose, set David Clifford, a man not overstocked with sense, to cut the cord and release Lord. He did so, and then the Sheriff ran after him, using his whip on poor Clifford's back. Next followed Jonathan Clifford, David's brother, a man weighing as much as the Sheriff and the



culprit both, to rescue his brother from the hands of the officer. How the matter was settled, I do not recollect, but I think, however, that the good Justice ordered Lord back to the tree, tied him for a short time so that the law should triumph and then let him loose. Whether he transcended his powers in this case, I know not. I then supposed he was right, and intended, as was the way in those days, to maintain the peace, not by letting the wicked run at large, but by executing the laws.

Esq. Story was a man of rather impressive presence. We boys thought so. As the custom then was, we made our bows to every passer by, whether in the road, or around the school-house. In this matter, we were very exact when Esq. Story passed on his stately horse with whip in hand in perpendicular position. We felt honored by his invariable response "brave boys—brave scholars." This reference recalls a statement I read a few years since of the late Hon. Edward Everett. It was to this effect: I and Hon. R. C. Winthrop were riding together, and as we approached a school house and the boys at recess, I said to Mr. Winthrop, "we shall see whether these scholars will treat us, as you and I did when *we* were boys at school. We passed them and instead of a respectful bow, we were treated with a *shower of snowballs*."

The Mills family was large and respectable. Maj., afterwards Deacon, the successor of my father in that office, was among the most prominent and honored citizens of his day. He was Representative eight years—Selectman twenty-two—and Town Treasurer, thirty-five years. Mr. Stark says, "The Mills family were staunch old-fashioned Federalists." Very good, in my judgment, none the worse for *that*. So was my venerated father, and David Story, and in essential principles, so were, and are, my father's children and grandchildren.

Of later times were John Gould, Daniel Jameson, William Parker, Deacons Alexander Wilson, McCurdy and others of my schoolmates too numerous to receive particular notice. "All honorable men."

On an occasion like this it will not be indelicate in me to say a few words relative to the Burnhams. They came from Ipswich, Mass., Chebacco parish, the hive of all of the name. Nathan, Asa, and Thomas—brothers, and Abraham, John, (familiarily called "Friend Johnry,") and Samuel, cousin to John. The wives of David and Daniel Story were also Burnhams, sisters to Abraham. They were all respectable and

useful citizens, and have left good families, and I am happy to see so many of the name here present, and to know that so many have proved themselves worthy of the confidence of their fellow citizens. I would like to be more definite in regard to the Burnhams, for I happen to be better acquainted with them than with those of any other name.

I was born and brought up in the midst of that cluster of Burnhams, natives of the same place and settlers in one neighborhood in the beautiful southern section of this town. There our fathers lived and labored, and brought up their families, and there they, and some of the second, third and fourth generation have died. And the last but two of Samuel Burnham's children, my last surviving brother, Bradford, has just passed away.

I ask leave here to state a few facts in the family of my father, Samuel Burnham, bearing on the covenant faithfulness of God, and the duties and privileges of a truly pious family.

Descended from a pious ancestry, themselves godly, my parents brought up thirteen children (two others died in infancy) "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Of these, twelve were decidedly pious; of the grand-children, (and the number was below the average) thirty were pious; and three of the great-grand-children are hopefully pious. Of the seven sons, four had a collegiate education, (Dartmouth College) two of whom were afterward ministers, (Abraham and Amos W.) one was a lawyer, (John) and one a teacher (Samuel.) Of the grand and great-grand-children, fourteen have graduated from college, or are now members of college, thus making a total of Collegiates of this family, eighteen. Of the grand-children, three are preachers, and of the great-grand-children, one; making a total of seven ministers in the family, of whom four or five are now preaching. Those not professors of religion, have held, and are now holding respectable and useful positions in the community, and ready to fulfill all the duties of an American citizen.

A wish has been expressed that the descendants of the early settlers should imitate their virtues. As one of the descendants of our worthy ancestors, I heartily join in this sentiment. I rejoice that while almost all of my youthful associates have long since passed away, I have been spared and am allowed to see this day, and to be present on this occasion. It is a celebration of deep interest to each and all of us who stand here in the stead of the fathers, and are to give shape to the character and destiny of coming generations.

The fathers laid the foundations in securing for themselves and their children the blessings of an open Bible, and free schools. They established the church and school-house, and having trained us under the wholesome influence flowing from christian homes and institutions, they left us in the quiet possession of this goodly heritage. While you welcome all the improvements of the present age, you will do well to heed the injunctions, "stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

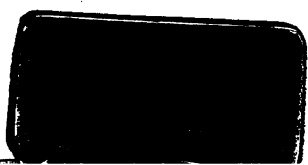
"Now the God of peace, that brought from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen."





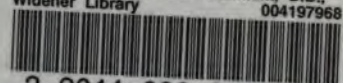








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